

1600/94.

E N V Y,

A

P O E M,

To GENERAL R. SMITH.

By the Author of the PROGRESS of FREEDOM.

All Fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain wou'd be upon the laughing Side;
If Mævius scribble, in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.

ESSAY ON CRITICISM

L O N D O N.

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M,DCC,LXXVI.

IN defence of many Gentlemen who have
made ample Fortunes in India, I will venture
to assert that they have not deviated from the
strictest Honour and Humanity.

Remarks on Dr. PRICE's Observations.



P L A N.

ENVY and the prevalence of an Opinion, however unjustifiable, form the Notions of Men : Beings, endowed with Reason, should be superior to Prejudice.---Parrots repeat what they hear, and can only be right from Chance.---Invocation to Humanity : why the Gentlemen of India merit the Approbation of their Fellow-citizens.--Story of Achates.--Anecdotes of the Nabob--of General Smith.--Sketch of Characters from India.---False Notions relative to the Acquisitions of immense Fortunes, not adequate to the Risque from so unhealthy a Climate.---Character of F--te.---Description of Envy.



E N V Y,

P O E M,

TO GENERAL R. SMITH.

ENVY! thou fatal passion of mankind!
Thou fiend that ravages the noblest mind!

O cou'd my verse dispell thy can crous spite,
Or doom thee justly to thy realms of night,
If glory gives her fav'rite well-earn'd fame;
She throws her tainted mist about his name--
If ease and riches court the plenteous hour,
They spring from crimes, or ill-got guilty pow'r.

If wit superior glows with Attic fire,
 The jealous Dæmon lights the fullen pyre--
 Infusing notions with envenom'd mind,
 She poisons half the hearts of human kind.
 The Roman priests thus damn each better sect,
 All go to Heav'n or Hell as they direct.
 Say mortals, why, when reason's gen'rous pow'r
 Informs you how to act, you thus devour
 Another's peace, unconscious of his pain,
 And not destroying, think your being vain.
 But you, Sir, scorn the wretch, whose narrow mind
 All merit scans, by notions so confin'd--
 Slave to no prejudice, no partial plan,
 A friend to honour, and a friend to man.
 When pride or envy, call it what you will,
 With tainted malice take their venom'd fill,
 Against the man, who spite of clime or toil,
 With ample ease reviews his native soil;
 Unconscious of deceit, the faithful muse
 Shall point its force against such odious views--

Attend



Attend, ye erring ! and with grateful hearts,
 Mark well the maxims which the muse imparts---
 To reason just, with microscopic view,
 Each action weigh--be candid where 'tis due--
 Reason, the deity that prompts the soul,
 With mercy join'd, shou'd animate the whole--
 The talking bird pent up within his cage,
 Just as he's taught, will praise or damn the age ;
 'Tis chance that dictates, 'tis th' effect of whim,
 But envy swells, if e'er her culprits swim.
 Come then humanity ! with looks serene,
 Spread thy soft wings, and with propitiate mien,
 Lead me, where truth with her indulgent rays,
 May grace my verse with plain, but honest praise.
 When first the youth, who thro' the stormy main,
 Views the great Ganges, and the Indian plain,
 All flush'd with life, with strong and nervate health,
 He fondly paints a rapid show'r of wealth ;
 He quickly learns, that 'tis a gradual rise,
 Alone can lead him to the wish'd for prize--

That

That then superior talents only raise,
 To "envied wealth, and" UNDESERV'D DISPRAISE,--
 Too soon he finds infectious fevers reign,
 His nerves relax'd--and each pernicious pain.
 What when I leave my Country and friends distressed,
 A wife belov'd, with darling infants blest ;
 With all the bliss domestic joys impart,
 The tend'rest ties that cling around the heart.--
 What when I brave the horrors of the main,
 When storms and tempests spread the liquid plain ;
 Thro' burning climates while relax'd I range,
 In torrid Zones no varying seasons change.
 If I escape, and with indulgent gains,
 My GOD restores me to my native plains--
 Shall then black calumny, with eye aghast,
 Damn all my toils, and ev'ry labour blast ?
 When did compassion weep with gen'rous eye,
 For those who fall beneath yon burning sky ;
 For those, whose pains begin and close the day,
 Still verging to their last by slow decay.--

Will

Will the kind reader here permit a tear,
 Which friendship sheds, and with compassion hear,--
 Blest with each native grace, each gen'rous part,
 ACHATES warm'd a sympathizing heart ;
 While in fond youth, a tender parent's boast,
 E'en rivals strove to imitate him most.
 But fortune frown'd, he early plough'd the main,
 With rising spirit to yon eastern plain ;
 'Twas there fond hope inspir'd that anxious toil,
 Wou'd soon restore him to his native soil.
 Sad sickness blasted all his fancied pow'r,
 And sorrows hasten'd on his fatal hour.
 Peace to thy shade ! thy once gay genius fled !
 " O may the turf lie lightly on thy head."
 But change the scene, see merit leads the way,
 Such glorious themes the muses will obey.
 Mercy will triumph at the pleasing deed,
 And virtue crown it, tho' the envious bleed !
 An Indian Prince, with gen'rous greatness fir'd,
 Which high humanity alone inspir'd ;

In rich luxuriance, tho' he past his days,
 This deed will merit everlasting praise---
 He heard full oft the British soldier dy'd,
 On well-fought plains.---The gallant Nabob sigh'd :
 This soldier he was told who fell, was brave,
 And left a widow sinking to her grave,
 In grief's ematiate arms---Struck with such woe,
 He gen'rous felt the sympathetic glow---
 He gave enough to dry the widow's tears,
 And chase pale want for ever from her fears.
 Such gifts from monarchs only can be giv'n,
 Such gifts are glorious, and resembling Heav'n--
 To deeds in humbler life, my verse shall flow,
 Such as the good will praise, the good bestow.
 You, Sir! too listen'd to the poor distress,
 And felt fair mercy beat around your breast.
 This be thy praise, the glorious deed be thine ;
 To speak thy worth, the pleasing task be mine.
 Let fortune frown, or malice wait thy name,
 Let the world praise thee, th' ill-natur'd blame--

Still

Still will the widow bless thee ev'ry hour,
 And still the Orphan all his blessings pour.--
 Whene'er they rise in ev'ry grateful pray'r,
 They'll own the tribute of thy gen'rous care ;
 Such deeds are balm to ev'ry honest mind,
 Welcome to GOD, and blest among mankind.
 By pride untainted, or by gay parade,
 In no vain trappings of contempt array'd--
 No slave to envy, still the gen'rous breast,
 Smiles with the happy, weeps with the DISTREST--
 'Tis true, the Indian will relieve distress,
 Profuse of wealth, and gen'rous to excess ;
 At first they lavish with as free a hand,
 As if POTOSI were at their command--
 Pomp that sustains an empire in the East--
 A num'rous train, and high luxuriant feast,
 Ill suit with British modes--But to divest,
 A long prevailing habit from the breast--
 No easy task- if rooted in the mind--
 Imbib'd from custom, and with pleasure join'd.

True, there were some in guilty vices bold,
 Who trod the paths of cruelty for gold--
 Who tortur'd the poor Savage till reveal'd,
 The wretched spot, his wretched gold conceal'd ;
 These, tho' not strange in those despotic climes,
 Curst be the men, for ever curst such crimes ;
 Be loud in your applause, when praise is just,
 But stigmatize the guilty e'en in dust---
 Whatever motives teach the cynic sneer,
 Know well the object of thy cruel leer ;
 If he deserves it, let thy pointed word
 Probe to the quick, nor fear it may be heard--
 Strip all the pompous equipage of pride,
 In judging men, let reason be the guide ;
 Think for yourself! "be candid where you can"--
 Nor form your judgment from another man---
 Who takes his notions, or directs his speech,
 Not from himself, but those who proudly teach,
 Will find he errs, as much as those who chuse,
 To form their taste of learning from reviews.

Yet

Yet often those, who should instruct the age,
 And bring forth moral virtues on the stage,
 Deprave our taste, and with pernicious pow'r,
 Cloud a whole life to please a transient hour.
 By nature form'd with ev'ry comic art,
 With ribbald wit, and mirth inspiring heart,
 With mimicry's curst pow'rs, F--te leads the van,
 Nor censures vice, yet dare expose the man.
 Has nature erring in your soul or frame,
 Gave some odd turn, or some peculiar name;
 Quick to the world; unheeding what you feel,
 He breaks your peace upon his dreadful wheel:
 Let him recall, tho' memory may stand,
 A morning visit from an Irish hand--
 The brave Hibernian only paid his score,
 And c--'d him well, who serv'd him worse before;
 Too gentle is rebuke, whene'er a Turk,
 Stabs at your fame, or makes the poison work--
 To show thee F--te, how much the feeling man,
 Rises above your execrable plan,

To drag to public view each private fault,
And rive his heart with all thy strongest thought.
A late attempt, as infamous as base,
To wound thy honour in the tend'rest place,
Claims much compassion from the public eye,
And just resentment for so vile a lye ;
Tho' oft unpitied you destroy another,
The gen'rous feel the sorrows of a brother ;
When envy spreads her all infectious wings,
All worth she poisons, and all merit stings,
Infernal Dæmon, curst thro' ev'ry age,
Detested ! foremost still on ev'ry stage ;
Thy haggard eyes that shun the conscious light,
Pierce thro' the gloom, and teem with cank'rous spite,
Thy frame deform'd, no virtue ever knew,
With malice nurs'd, with venom'd adders grew ;
To stab your peace, she tries each specious art,
And murders ev'ry virtue of the heart.

F I N I S.

